

Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests Program



Community foresters measure the diameter of a tree to calculate the amount of carbon stored. The LEAF program trains people in forest management across the Lower Mekong region.

Photo Credit: Winrock International

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes that Asia's forests contribute greatly to the region and the communities that depend on them and is constantly seeking innovative ways to encourage better forest management.

As part of the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI), the Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests program is a five-year regional effort which was started in early 2011 to promote regional collaboration on forest management. The program's regional approach is to strengthen the technical capacity of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as other countries, to improve forest management. The program also provides technical support to the ASEAN Regional Knowledge Network on Forestry and Climate Change (ARKN-FCC) in developing a decision support tool to help countries identify and address drivers of deforestation, and re-focus the *Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation plus* process.

Working regionally means that the LMI countries can learn directly from each other – and U.S. experts – what works and what does not, as each balances competing demands on forests and land, while working to enhance forest carbon storage.

PROMOTING REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The program helps Lower Mekong countries identify the most economical and effective ways to manage their land and forests and works through regional partnerships to replicate successful approaches. Partnerships focus on developing common scientific standards and protocols. The program puts a major emphasis on strengthening national and provincial government agencies and existing organizations, as these are often instrumental in sustaining momentum on land management issues.

INCENTIVES FOR GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTIONS

One way to encourage improved forest management policies is through market incentives that reward local communities and private sector companies for managing forests responsibly. Another way is to address impediments to proper forest management. For example, many people in rural Asia lack clear titles to their property. Without these titles, people often lack the incentive to manage land for long-term sustainability or plant trees that might take a generation to reach maturity.

MONITORING FOREST CARBON

It requires considerable scientific and technical ability to monitor changes in forest cover and calculate the amount of carbon a forest actually contains. The program works to strengthen each country's technical capability through specialized trainings and the development of university-level educational curricula on climate change.

PARTNERS

Winrock International is the prime implementing partner for the LEAF program. SNV–Netherlands Development Organization and Climate Focus are partners of Winrock. SNV is recognized for its expertise in community forestry, rural development, and local renewable energy. Climate Focus is a leader in climate policy development.

CONTACT

USAID RDMA

Email: info-rdma@usaid.gov

Athenee Tower, 25th Floor
63 Wireless Road, Lumpini, Patumwan
Bangkok, 10330
Tel: (6-62) 257-3170
Fax: (6-62) 257-3134

Website: <http://asia.usaid.gov/asia-regional>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/USAIDAsia

Twitter: @USAIDAsia